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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Agricultural Adjustment Administration
Washington, D. C.

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U. S. Department of Agriculture

March 27, 1937.

MEMORANDUM TO MR. MORSE SALISBURY
Chief of Radio Service.

Dear Mr. Salisbury:

I am writing you with reference to the matter which we have had under discussion for some time of developing material that might be used locally by farmers in radio talks on the 1937 Agricultural Conservation Program. Mr. M. L. DuMars, of the Press Section of our Division, as you know, has been working on the organization of such material in consultation with yourself and other members of the Radio Service. Our regional representatives, also, have been giving the matter considerable thought, and here and there, it has been possible to initiate a series of talks by local farmers in relation to the program.

Recognizing the situation which you have pointed out to Mr. Stedman and myself, regarding the limited time available for agricultural matter on radio stations, it appears to us that any general and widespread effort of this sort would have to be undertaken on the basis of getting such localized programs set up at local points during the period now reserved for the Farm Flashes from the Department and the State extension services. The carrying out of this suggestion immediately involves us in the problem of coordinating any efforts which we would like to see developed with those which the Department as a whole has in mind, in relation to the radio time and facilities available. It is our thought, therefore, that in this instance, since our suggestions involve adjustments in the use of the Farm Flash period on local stations, you will prefer to have the initiation of this particular type of radio activity presented to extension editors as a part of your contacts with them in regard to the Department's program for the utilization of radio. I am saying this as I know from what you have told us that pressure of Government agencies, advertisers, and of general religious educational and cultural agencies for broadcasting periods within the 16 hours of the broadcasting day has become so great that each Government Department of necessity must centralize its broadcasting activities so as not to add to the confusion of the broadcasters. As I understand it, the situation has become so acute that there have been moves not only for the centralization of broadcasting of each Department, but for the Government as a whole. With this situation in mind, we will appreciate it if you will contact the extension editors who are using the Farm Flash service with reference to what we have in mind in the matter of encouraging the making of radio talks by individual farmers.

In looking over the material which is attached you will note that Mr. DuMars has not tried to write a complete talk or interview.

Sincerely yours,

Reuben Brigham, Chief,
Regional Contact Section,
Division of Information.

Enclosure.

PROPOSED OUTLINE FOR TALK BY FARMER ON AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION PROGRAM

I. Introduction --

- A. Reference to state and local participation and interest
 - 1. A few reasons why farmers of this community like the program
- B. Brief statement of national objectives
 - 1. Why the whole nation is interested

II. Development --

- A. Participation this year locally
 - 1. 1936 checks now coming in, and other results now apparent
 - 2. Speaker's own plans for taking part
 - 3. Payments enable farmers to make changes toward conservation that they could not afford before
 - 4. Changes eventually cut cost of production per unit.
 - 5. Remembrance of low prices for locally important commodity, or other bad farming condition
 - a. One aim of this program is to prevent prices from falling to such depths
- *B. Participation nationally --
 - 1. Broad program has place for every farmer
 - 2. Variations in program intentional
 - a. Meet varied requirements of the thousands of localities
 - b. Requirements brought out in the community meetings last fall
 - 3. Suggestion of what widespread participation means to producers and consumers
 - 4. Evidence that it is time to stop exploiting and start conserving
- C. Refutation of objections (see notes) --
 - 1. Some stay out of program to gamble on cash crop killing
 - a. Not pleasant in case of drought, for instance
 - 2. Some mistrust program, say it aims to control private rights
 - a. This is democratic program, however
 - b. Distrust of program indicates distrust of democracy itself
 - 3. Possible other objections, perhaps local

III. Conclusion --

- A. Direct plea to take part, if farmer wishes
- B. Offer of information assistance by committeemen, county agents
 - 1. This offer discretionary with speaker

*Few references to the national situation are advised, but outline provides for some remarks if desired. Local situation is much more important in this talk.

Some Questions the Agent Might Ask the Farmer for Broadcast
(For practical use, each question might be divided into several questions)

1. What has the program enabled you to do, that you might not have been able to do otherwise?
2. What practices that you have long favored does the program encourage in this county? Why do you like these practices especially?
3. What results can you already see after using some crop or practice encouraged by the program?
4. What do you think the result will be if most farmers in the county will farm in the conservation way, using crops and practices that the program encourages, over a period of, say, 10 years?
5. Why doesn't every farmer take part in the program, in your opinion? Is it a desire to gamble, perhaps? Is it misunderstanding of the purposes of the program?
6. Would you advise others to take part in the program?

If the county agent and the farmer carry on a dialog, the farmer naturally would ask for information as well as give it. An exchange of opinion, in the most natural conversational form, is better than plain question-and-answer dialog.

Notes About National Aspect of Program

The policy farmers are developing seeks to provide for the most efficient and economical use and the wisest care of national resources with, at the same time, ample production at prices fair to both consumers and producers. Specifically, such a program of agricultural conservation would safeguard soil against exploitation; it would enable agriculture to provide for the farmer's

family a living standard comparable to that enjoyed by the other three-fourths of the country's population; it would enable agriculture to contribute its share to the business and industry of the Nation through possessing an adequate and stable farm buying power; and it would supply the Nation with food and fiber in abundance, but not in such excess as to penalize the farmer and through him the national economy.

During the period just before 1933 American farm production was increasing, domestic consumption remained steady, and exports were falling off rapidly. This unbalanced condition was in part offset, after 1933, by two droughts and the agricultural adjustment programs. But the same condition could be brought back again by normal growing conditions and by the policy of going ahead without plan, permitting and even compelling farmers to compete with each other in producing and selling. To remove these sudden and wide fluctuations in production, price, and income, with their bad effects on both farmers and consumers, American farmers must be enabled to adopt a sounder and more scientific farming system. They must be able to produce abundantly, and with the greatest efficiency, and to preserve their soil and its capacity for producing. At the same time they must be able to avoid producing too much. Conservation farming, sought and encouraged by the farm program of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, tends to level out fluctuations in supply and price, whether due to economic or to natural forces. It means the production of adequate supplies sufficiently and at low cost. It provides for growing crops such as grasses, legumes, and forage, more drought resistant than intensively cultivated crops. It maintains the producing capacity of the land by reducing the drain on its plant food and protecting it from washing or blowing away.

At the same time, but as a byproduct, it helps to balance the production of major crops against the existing demand for them. Land planted in soil-conserving crops is not growing oversupplies of basic crops to be wasted or sold at a loss to the farmer.

United action is more effective than individual action. The Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act furnishes for this united action a mechanism that makes it unnecessary for the individual farmer to sacrifice too heavily in the hope that all other farmers will do the same thing and that all will profit in the long run.

Secretary Wallace says: "As never before the Nation has awakened to the need of stopping the exploitation of soil resources. Conservation of soil is the last line of defense against national suicide. That defense must go on."

Waste of soil has been so extensive that conservation of soil resources has become a national problem.

The Triple-A conservation program seeks better balance between crops which conserve the soil and crops which deplete the soil. It seeks more widespread use of farming practices which maintain and restore productivity. The methods provided in the program for attaining these objectives are based on the experience of farmers and the recommendations which they developed for 1937 in community meetings.

Concerning objections to the program, H. R. Tolley, Administrator, AAA, says:

"...some men are doubtful. They may be men in cash crop sections who feel strongly the urge to recoup past losses by gambling this year on a big acreage of the depleting crops in the hope that prices will hold up. These men might well get and study the facts about the probable production and price of the crop on which they want to gamble. Then they can figure out if they will be as well off if they farm in a conservative way as if they farm in a gambling way. A report on the outlook for production and price of the cash crops has recently been issued by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics and can be obtained from the county agricultural agent. The men who want to gamble for a cash crop killing this year also may well ask themselves where they will be if a drought or other crop disaster befalls their section. They probably will conclude that under such circumstances they'll be better off under the conservation program than outside it.

"Some men are doubtful about entering the 1937 conservation program because they look upon it in some obscure way as a scheme to get control over their private property. About the only way to dispel such fears is to renew one's faith in our fellow men. The agricultural conservation program is voluntary; it has been democratically worked out and will be democratically administered. It seems to me distrust of the program is tantamount to distrust of the democratic process and of the motives or the judgment of one's fellow farmers."

Regional needs met by program, in brief:

Northeast -- emphasizes principles of prudent, conservative farming that men have learned through two centuries of experience; payments help meet cost of needed soil saving and building practices.

East Central -- helps achieve live-at-home type of farming long sought after by farm leaders; gives some help in stabilizing tobacco production and prevent wide swings in prices.

South -- helps achieve live-at-home objective; helps farmers establish terracing, liming, cover crops to overcome menace of erosion and depletion; provides diversion payments to reduce danger of planting too much cotton.

North Central -- gives financial aid for getting in temporary forage crops to meet emergency feed demands this year; helps guard against feed shortage another drought would bring by encouraging better balance between small grains and corn, which seldom get caught in same drought; encourages increase of legume acreage to good-farming standard and such soil building practices as terracing and liming.

Western -- offers help in replenishing livestock feed supplies, rehabilitating ranges, protecting soil against blowing and washing.
